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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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## THE HISTORY OF EARLY EDUCATION.

### I. INTRODUCTION.

The History of Education hangs on the History of the World. No thorough survey of it is possible which does not presume a considerable acquaintance with the history of the leading races which have occupied and subdued the earth and formed themselves into civilized societies.

At what successive periods did these races enter on a progressive civilization ; what were the leading intellectual and moral characteristics of each ; under what circumstances of climate, soil, and contention with other nascent or dying nations were their native characteristics developed and moulded ; and what was the issue of all to the wealth, the life, the thought, the art of humanity ?—these are all questions which concern us intimately as students of the history of education. For the history of the education of a people is the history of its civilization ; and its civilization finds its record mainly in its intellectual, moral, and aesthetic achievements, and only in a subordinate way in its material successes.

To treat of the education of the human race in its broadest conception—to speak of all the influences which have made it what it is—would be to attempt a philosophy of history. We have, accordingly, to narrow our view ; and this we can do only by first narrowing the scope of the word education. The education of the ancient Egyptians, for example, is not synonymous with the history of the civilization of that race as a factor in the universal history of man. At the same time, it is impossible to speak intelligently of the education of that remarkable people without forming a pretty clear conception of the ideal of life and character to which they

unconsciously attained, or after which they consciously strove. For by education, even in the narrow sense in which the word must be employed in this place, I mean the means which a nation, with more or less definiteness of purpose, takes for bringing up its youth with a view to their maintaining the national ideal of character and promoting the welfare of the nation as an organized ethical community. It is essential, therefore, to an understanding of this, that we should understand the objects which the nation, as such, desired to secure ; in brief, its own more or less conscious ideal of national life, character, honor, and progress. If we can ascertain this by the study of its highest products in men, deeds, and arts, we have made a great step towards interpreting the course of training to which it would naturally endeavor to subject its youth.

For this is what specially interests us. What was the nature of the discipline by means of which each generation hoped to rear up fit successors to itself ; how did it give effect to that discipline ; and over what area of the population did that discipline extend ? The answer to these questions gives us the state of education in any individual country ; and the tracing of the successive changes in educational aims and practice gives us the history of education in that country.

In the general history of education, however, it is the first part of our inquiry which must specially engage our attention. The materials for satisfying the second part are, in the case of ancient nations, not always available, and we must be content therefore with a knowledge of their educational ideas and methods at their best epoch—the point at which they had reached their highest intellectual moral energy and given the world all they had to give by way of contribution to its progress.

We may quickly despatch the vast variety of tribes which are still in a savage state, and which, either by innate incapacity for development, or by the force of irresistible external circumstances, have risen little above the beasts that perish. The human possibilities of such tribes may be, in germ, as high as those of many more favored races ; but this is more than doubtful. They labor to acquire skill in getting food by the exercise either of bodily vigor or successful cunning ; and they cherish the virtue of bravery in warding off the attacks of others like themselves. As they have, however, no political or ethical ideal, they can have

no education in the sense in which we use the term, or care to use it. For training to expertness in the use of the weapons of the chase or of war is not education, except in the narrowest technical sense. It is only when the *idea* of bodily vigor, of personal bravery, and of manly strength and beauty become desired for themselves or as the necessary conditions of political life that education begins; and then the training which is consciously undertaken to produce these has an ideal aim, more or less conscious. A training which contemplates an aim for the man as such is education in the proper sense of the term.

It is only, then, with those nations which, by virtue of their ordered civilization, had an idea of individual and of national life, and which, by virtue of their having this idea, possessed a civilization, that we have to do. The races which chiefly interest us are the Indo-European or Aryan, to which we ourselves belong, and it might be sufficient to trace the History of Education among the peoples who bear the Aryan character, as that has developed itself west of the Caucasus; but we might feel the survey of educational history to be imperfect if we did so, and it is desirable, therefore, to comprehend other centers of civilization, such as the Egyptian, the Semitic, and Chinese, and not wholly to omit the Aryan element south-east of the Caucasus.

We are compelled, I have said, from lack of records, to confine ourselves in dealing with the education of ancient nations to the highest and most generalized expression of their educational life, and this for want of materials to do anything else; but we know enough to be able to say that as the ideal of life grows in a nation, its idea of education grows and it begins to ask more and more in a self-conscious way, How can we attain this ideal in the persons of our children? Thus arise *systems* of education in civilized countries. Such systems as really have existed prior to the asking of this question, are not consciously constructed with a view to a specific result. Nations, like individuals, feel their way to the highest expression of their national life and to the best machinery for sustaining and promoting it, taught by the results of experience and their ever-growing understanding of the nature and destiny of man and the conditions of national permanence.

Thus it is that the education of a nation has always been determined mainly by its moral and spiritual instructors who are the conservators of its thought. These instructors have in all ages

been more or less identified with the church, in one form or other ; and if there be no church, then by that which takes its place—the political ideal of life for the citizen, which generally embodies religious, if not also theological, conceptions. The educational aim is always practical, in the large sense of the word ; for it has always to do with life in some form or other, and indeed presumes a philosophy of life. Even the study of philosophy and its hand-maid religion, and of poetry that irradiates both with the glow of human emotion, has a practical aim—the nobler life of a man as an individual and as a citizen : and when it forgets this aim it degenerates into verbal frivolities.

The influences which educate a nation, to which I have briefly or by implication adverted, seem to demand further consideration if we are to prepare our minds properly for the contemplation of educational world-history.

The education of a people is, *first* of all, the unpremeditated education of national character, institutions, and of the instinctive ideals of personal and community life—all in contact with certain external conditions, and moulding, or being moulded, by these. *Secondly*, it is the means a people may consciously take, but *without a systematized purpose*, for handing down its tradition through the family, the organized state or the school, or all of these combined. *Thirdly*, the education of a country, while comprehending both the preceding forms of education, may be a more or less self-conscious organization of the idea and aims of the national life, and the reduction of these to an elaborate State school-system, which meets the presumed needs of the citizen at every age from infancy to manhood.

Into every form of national education the professional and technical must always enter at some point, and may thwart or promote the larger general aim. For all civilized societies demand services of a specific kind, which can fitly be discharged only by those who are trained to discharge them. The division of occupations, all of which are in their degree serviceable to the community, makes this specific training necessary, if the service is to be efficiently rendered. Thus we have classes of the population trained and devoted to the various industrial arts, to the fine arts, to the service of man's body—the medical art ; the service of mutual rights—the legal art ; the service of man's spirit—the priestly art, of which last the teaching art is a branch ; to the military art ; and so forth.

In our modern complex civilizations the educational problem is, How shall we conserve the national type, tradition, and ideal, and, while training for specific arts, educate all to such type of manhood as their racial possibilities and tradition admit of? In other words, we have to find a common basis for education, and also to provide a specific training to various social services.

The education of a man as a member of a nation and for manhood simply is what we mean by "liberal" education: the training for specific services is technical, whether we dignify some of these services by calling them professions or not. The stress of competition among individuals and nations compels us, unhappily, more and more to give a specific character to our training, and to ignore the larger national and human aims. It is clear, however, that in so far as we lose sight of the latter in the interest of the former we err: because it is the broad human and national element in education which gives character and power. If we fail in giving these, all specific activities of mind will be weakened by the weakening of their foundation in the man simply as a man. In the systematization of education, accordingly, the real problem is (in modern times), How shall we rear specific aptitudes on the basis of a common instruction and discipline which shall contemplate the man and the citizen, and only in the second place the worker?

Passing this modern problem meanwhile and confining ourselves to the education of the individual in the broad sense, we find that all civilized nations have had a more or less conscious system when they have had a more or less conscious aim. Not, it is true, embodied in a school-system but always active in the family and the civic life. Historically viewed we find that the state is made up of families not individuals. Each man is what his fathers have made him, and what he is even now making his children. He himself is but a transition point from the past to the future. Alongside this family tradition of education is the state tradition as embodied in laws and institutions, religious and civic, and these two influences together are sufficient to educate a nation in certain circumstances. This is the first of the three forms of national education to which I have adverted above. The Romans were educated in this way and they had moulded themselves and their state for 500 years, and were already marked for empire, before they had any schools. So also the Persians were a brilliant and imperial nation without schools in the modern sense of the

word. Hellenic education again, for probably two centuries before Socrates, was an illustration of the second form of national education in which state tradition and institutions combined with schools (existing but as yet undeveloped) to form the Greek mind and body. In post-Socratic times, the Greek became self-conscious in his educational aims—he had a type of man whom he aimed at producing; and the Romans towards the end of the Republic followed, with some differences, the leading of Greece.

What is true of Greece before Socrates is true also of Egypt for 3000 years before Christ, and of the Jews till after the exile.

The only nations in pre-Christian times that had attained to the third form of national education before the Christian era were the Chinese and the Doric Greeks as represented by the Spartans. The former had a definite ideal of human excellence such as it was, but always with a view to the service of a bureaucratic state. So with the Spartans where the whole organization (but the Spartans were, after all, a mere tribe) was educational and every free born citizen was deliberately formed to a certain ideal—also (as in China) in the interests of civic continuity.

The Hellenic races, however, had no conception of education as a *human* need and a *human* right; they thought only of the free, pure Greeks who formed an aristocracy among a body of inferiors. This characteristic of the Greeks was specially emphasized in Sparta. In Egypt, Judea, Persia, and China, on the other hand, nothing stood, theoretically at least, between the lowest member of the community and the best the state could offer in the way of education, except poverty. The Romans also, thought only of the upper section of society. It was the Stoics in the earlier imperial times who first rose to the conception of humanity and of human, as distinct from local and national, rights, and Christianity about the same time affirmed these. The Stoic and the Christian were the first humanitarians.

In taking a survey of the history of education we have to bear in mind the distinctions I have made (and which might with advantage be even further elaborated) and carry them always with us. If we do not, we shall certainly fail to interpret facts aright and to learn the lessons which the past has to teach.

To this conclusion we must, I think, be all compelled, that while fully recognizing the educative influence of national forms, customs and institutions, the most powerful influence on the men-

tal growth of the child is the parent, because he focuses and transmits these. The family, in a special sense, is and must always be the center of true education. If the family is safe and sound, the state is safe and sound. And when owing to social necessities, a class of the community is set apart to do the work of the family, that class must be in every sense *in loco parentis*:—that is to say, the aims, materials, and methods of the school must be those of a humane and enlightened parent, and the influence of the school must be, as much as possible, a continuation and extension of the family conception of education, rather than a substitute for it. If this single idea is accepted, the deductions from it will be found to be numerous and significant.

(*To be continued.*)

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## LATIN IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

The educational world has been busily engaged in recent years in "taking account of stock." The various studies and methods employed for purposes of instruction and discipline have been taken down from the shelves, so to speak, and subjected to fresh inspection, with the object of determining whether they still possess a market value. In this process it has been the ancient classics whose worth has been chiefly called in question. From various quarters and with varying degrees of logic and vehemence these time-honored studies have repeatedly been arraigned. While the attack has been directed mainly against the classics as college studies, and more particularly against Greek than Latin, yet Latin has been, and still is, the object of fierce assault, not only as a part of the college curriculum, but as a study of the secondary schools as well. It is on this latter subject—Latin in the secondary school—that I shall venture to make a few observations touching its claims and the methods by which it may be made an efficient instrument of discipline and culture. The discussion, therefore, is not a general discussion of the utility of the classics, nor is it a consideration of the claims or position of Latin in the college or university. This caution seems necessary at the outset, since many persons, when one of the classical languages is men-